REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action of August 23, 2004. In that Office Action the Examiner rejected all claims as anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,325 issued to Reed et al. (Reed).

In rejecting the claims the Examiner uses Reed as an anticipatory reference relating to methods and attributes being persistently stored. Reed uses the term "persistent" to mean that an object or variable exists for a relatively long time and is not immediately discarded after use but which can change over time. However, the present application attaches a significantly different meaning to the term "persistent" -- that is the quality of each version of an element (e.g., an attribute, or a method) to exist for a relatively long time, even though the element may undergo changes and modifications (and thus obtain many versions). Thus, it is each version of the element that persists, not just the element in some form. For example, a persistent attribute may require the storage of multiple values of the attribute resulting from multiple changes. Similarly, a persistent method may require the storage of multiple versions of the method.

Applicants believe that the claims as previously presented are patentable for the above stated reasons. However, Applicants have amended the claims to make even more clear the distinction between the claims and the prior art. Thus, the presently amended claims include language that distinguishes Reed in a more clear and straightforward manner.

Specifically, the claims were amended to recite that more than one value for an attribute is stored in a database, and/or that more than one versions of a method is stored in the database. Also, some amendments were made to more precisely describe the relationships between the various objects and classes, and to provide antecedent basis for the database limitation.

Applicants note, that the present amendments are not intended change the scope of the claims in any manner, they are merely a way of describing the same subject matter in different words. The previous versions of the claims being patentable for the above described reasons, Applicants do not consider these amendments to be made for the purpose of patentability.

Reed does not disclose storing multiple values of a single attribute in a database, associating each value with an effective time, or context, and using one of the values based on a specified time or context. Similarly, Reed does not disclose storing multiple versions of a single method in a database, associating each version with an effective time or context and executing a particular version of the method based on a specified time or context. Since all independent claims include a combination of some or all of the above elements, all claims are patentable in view of Reed.

Reed is generally only concerned with the most current versions of objects. Reed discloses various methods for updating objects, but never discloses keeping the old versions of the objects. Thus, in its Background section Reed criticizes the prior art, because it does not provide updated information (col. 4, lines 6-9). Reed also stresses the updating of persistent objects while never disclosing that any previous values are being stored, and are capable of subsequent use (see, for example, col. 59, lines 4-7).

Since Reed discloses a system where multiple instances of a database are stored in different computers (see, e.g., Fig. 1), it is not surprising that Reed may mention a situation where different versions of the object are stored in two database instances (col. 59, lines 40-59). However, this does not anticipate any of the present claims, since they require that the multiple values of an argument and/or multiple versions of a method be stored in the *same database*. Furthermore, Reed does not allow these multiple versions of an object to be accessed based on a specified time or context. Instead, Reed treats the presence of different versions of objects as an undesirable event, and updates the objects to match a single most recent version when such multiple versions are found (see col. 59, lines 40-59). Therefore, Reed teaches away from the present invention by actively preventing any older versions of an object to be used.

In general, the other citations offered by the examiner disclose updating of various objects. These are not relevant to the present invention for the above described reasons, i.e. they disclose conventional methods of updating and do not disclose any of the novel features of the present invention, such as, for example, retaining old and present values in the same database.

The Examiner states that Applicants' previous arguments regarding persistence are moot because they refer to “an unclaimed merit of distinction” (Examiner's Action, page 6, second paragraph). Applicants respectfully suggest that the Examiner reached this conclusion because did not appreciate Applicant’s use of the term "persist" (see the above discussion). Nevertheless, Applicants submit that as presently amended the claims now specifically recite storing multiple values of an argument and/or storing multiple versions of a method. Therefore, the argument that "Reed doesn't specifically disclose the ability to review the original value" (as the Examiner put it) is no longer moot, since this distinction flows from the present claim language.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that a notice of allowance be issued. Considering the time sensitivity of this Final Action, Applicants urge the Examiner to call Applicants' attorney Hristo Vachovsky at (212) 527-7648, if the Examiner believes this will speed up the proceedings.

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Respectfully submitted,

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